

Communication and Media Studies Internship Guidelines

Purpose

The Department of Communication and Media Studies requires all majors to complete an internship as part of their degree requirements. Internships provide opportunities for students to apply classroom learning in professional settings, develop career-related skills, build professional networks, and explore potential career paths.

All Communication and Media Studies majors must complete one unit (four credits) of internship coursework as a graduation requirement. Students may also complete a second one-unit internship that may count as an elective.

Eligibility

Students are encouraged to complete their internship after attaining junior standing and completing at least three courses in the major. This timing helps ensure that students possess sufficient academic preparation to maximize the educational value of the internship experience. Under special circumstances, students may be permitted to complete an internship earlier. Requests for exceptions should be discussed with the department's internship instructor.

Finding an Internship

Students are encouraged to consult with both their faculty advisor and the department's internship instructor regarding internship opportunities and how specific experiences align with their academic and professional goals.

Students are responsible for securing their own internship opportunities. Internships may be obtained through:

- Professional networking
- Online job and internship postings
- Direct outreach to organizations of interest
- Resources provided by the Office of Career Success
- Recommendations from faculty and professional contacts

When pursuing internship opportunities, students should consider how the experience supports their long-term career goals, professional development, and connection to their communication and media studies major.

Internship Areas

Students have successfully completed internships in a variety of fields, including:

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- Broadcasting
- Chamber of Commerce
- Creative Design
- Digital Marketing
- Donor Relations
- Editing
- Event Planning
- Human Resources
- Journalism
- Law
- Marketing
- Museums
- Outreach Coordination
- Public Relations
- Research
- Sales
- Social Media
- Special Events
- Sport/Athletics Communications
- Strategic Communication
- Television Production
- Website Management

This list is representative rather than exhaustive. Other opportunities may be approved if they provide meaningful communication and/or media-related experience.

Internship Requirements

To satisfy the internship requirement, students must complete 140 total hours of approved internship work in conjunction with enrollment in COMM 397 Internship. Students may fulfill this requirement through one of the following options:

Option 1: One Full Internship

- One internship site
- Minimum of 140 hours
- Registered for one unit (four credits) of COMM 397 at the time of the internship

Option 2: Two Half-Unit Internships

- Two separate half-unit internships totaling 140 hours
- Minimum of 70 hours per internship
- May be completed at one or two different internship sites
- May be completed in different semesters
- Registered for a ½ unit (two credits) of COMM 397 at the time of the internship

Internship responsibilities must be related to and emphasize communication and/or media.

Internship Standards

The Department of Communication and Media Studies follows the internship principles established by the National Association of Colleges and Employers ([NACE](#)).

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NACE defines an internship as:

A form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional workplace setting (across in-person, remote, or hybrid modalities). Internships provide students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience, develop social capital, explore career fields, and make connections in professional fields.

Consistent with these principles, The Department of Communication and Media Studies requires that approved internships include:

- A meaningful learning experience that applies knowledge gained in coursework.
- Work that is educational in nature and not intended solely to advance the employer's operations or replace the duties of a regular employee.
- Opportunities to develop skills and knowledge transferable to future employment settings.
- A defined beginning and end that is mutually agreed upon and consistent with institutional sponsor guidelines and schedules.
- A position description that outlines responsibilities and required or preferred qualifications.
- Clearly defined learning objectives/goals supportive of the student's academic program goals and institutional requirements.
- Direct supervision by a professional(s) with relevant expertise and educational and/or professional experience who provides productive feedback, guidance, and the resources and equipment necessary to successfully complete the assignment.

([NACE](#))

Restrictions

To ensure appropriate professional supervision, evaluation, and academic experience:

- Students may not complete an internship under the direct supervision of an immediate family member.
- Student-athletes may not complete an internship under the direct supervision of one of their coaches.
- Students may not be supervised primarily by another student, intern, or peer employee.
- Students may not receive internship credit for routine work they are already performing at their place of employment.
- Clerical or administrative duties may be part of an internship but cannot constitute the majority of the experience.

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- Hours completed prior to departmental approval, registration in COMM 397, and execution of all required internship documentation will not count toward the internship hour requirement.

Internship Approval Process

Once a student identifies a potential internship, the student must:

1. Contact the department's internship instructor.
2. Complete the required pre-approval form.
3. Provide requested information about the internship position, responsibilities, supervision, and learning opportunities.
4. Receive departmental approval before proceeding with registration.

If the internship is approved, the student will be granted permission to begin the registration process for the COMM 397 Internship course.

Students will not receive retroactive academic credit for internship experiences that were completed without prior departmental approval and registration in COMM 397. Students must receive approval before beginning any internship for academic credit.

Registration and Required Documentation

Students must remain in close communication with the internship instructor throughout the registration process.

Once students have gained approval from the internship instructor, in accordance with University requirements, students must complete the online academic internship registration form that includes a liability waiver and a learning agreement that must be signed by the student, internship instructor, Department Chair, and internship site supervisor. It is imperative that accurate information is provided on that form.

Students who fail to obtain all required signatures by the designated deadline, typically before the end of the University's drop/add period, may be unable to register for the course.

Course Requirements

Students must be enrolled in COMM 397 Internship while completing internship hours. Course expectations, assignments, deadlines, and assessment requirements will be provided in the course syllabus at the beginning of the semester.

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Questions

Students interested in completing an internship for academic credit should contact the Communication and Media Studies internship instructor as early as possible to discuss eligibility, approval requirements, and registration procedures.

Revised 9/2/26